



Quality Benefits, Targeted Advocacy & Education for Today's Seniors  
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## **Congress Eyes Early Recess as Mid-Term Elections Draw Closer**

*AHIP, Washington Update, 9/24/2010*

With less than six weeks remaining before the November 2 elections, congressional leaders are considering an early recess – possibly by the end of next week – to allow rank-and-file members to devote their full attention to their reelection campaigns.

The main legislative priority for next week is passage of a continuing resolution to provide temporary funding for federal programs and agencies in the new fiscal year that begins on October 1, 2010. Congress has not yet completed action on any of the annual appropriations bills for fiscal year 2011. Once the continuing resolution is approved and sent to the President's desk, there will be strong pressure for Congress to recess as soon as possible.

The House voted this week to approve a wide range of non-controversial bills that have strong bipartisan support. Some of these bills address health-related issues such as infant mortality programs (H.R. 3470), research on autism (H.R. 5756), liability protections for volunteer health care professionals (H.R. 1745), prescription drug monitoring (H.R. 5710), SSI eligibility for certain clinical trial participants (S. 1674), and a prohibition on the participation of sanctioned persons and organizations in federal health programs (H.R. 6130).

## **Six-Month Anniversary of PPACA**

The Administration planned a number of activities this week surrounding the six-month anniversary of the enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). President Obama participated in an event in Falls Church, Virginia where he delivered remarks about a series of health reform provisions that became effective on September 23, including provisions addressing lifetime limits, appeals procedures, dependent coverage for children up to age 26, out-of-network emergency services, coverage of preventive services, and restrictions on rescissions. The President also met with state insurance commissioners to discuss implementation issues.



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## **House Republican Agenda Addresses Health Reform Issues**

On September 23, House Republicans announced a document entitled "A Pledge to America," outlining a set of proposals which they described as "a new governing agenda built on the priorities of our nation, the principles we stand for, and America's founding values."

The Republican agenda announced yesterday focuses on six broad areas: (1) creating jobs and enhancing economic growth and competitiveness; (2) controlling government spending and reducing the size of government; (3) repealing the health reform law and replacing it with alternative reforms; (4) reforming Congress; (5) strengthening national security and border security; and (6) checks and balances to protect the rights of the American people.

The section on health reform includes seven components:

- repealing the health reform law;
- ensuring access for patients with pre-existing conditions by: (1) expanding state high-risk pools and reinsurance programs; (2) prohibiting insurers from denying coverage to people with prior coverage on the basis of a pre-existing condition; (3) eliminating annual and lifetime limits; (4) prohibiting rescissions; and (5) incentivizing states to develop innovative programs that lower premiums and reduce the number of uninsured Americans;
- allowing individuals to cross state lines to purchase health insurance;
- enacting medical liability reforms;
- improving Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) by making it easier for patients with high-deductible health plans to use them to obtain access to quality care;
- strengthening the doctor-patient relationship through unspecified "common-sense" reforms; and



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- establishing a government-wide prohibition on taxpayer funding of abortion and subsidies for insurance coverage that includes abortion, and enacting conscience protections for health care providers.

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